STORIES SHORT. STORIES TALL.

SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 331. FOR WEEK ENDING MAY 4, 1895. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

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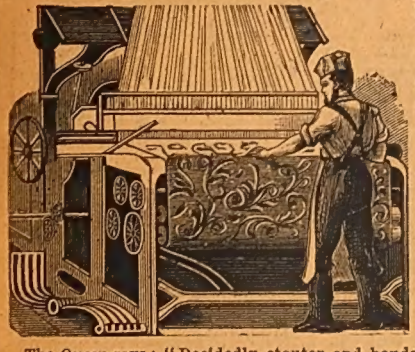

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SHORT STORIES.

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON.

No. 331.] *FOR THE WEEK ENDING MAY 4, 1895.* [PRICE ONE PENNY.

FLORRIE BAKER was in a very bad temper. This was surprising, for she was usually a most sweet-tempered girl. Nevertheless, as she sat vindictively tearing into fragments the letter she had just been reading, she looked and felt, as she herself would have expressed it, like a "perfect fiend." The reason of her unwonted anger requires a little explanation. It was this. Some two years before, Florrie had been proposed to by a certain penniless young barrister, named Robert Carstairs, and had accepted him.

But Florrie's parents were cautious, and wishing to discover if the young man could earn enough at his profession to provide for a wife, with a margin in case of ill-fortune, they placed one obstacle in the way of the young people's union. That was, that the marriage should not take place until Robert could show at least £500 to his credit in the bank. This was rather a facer, but Robert pulled himself together, and, by March of this year, owing to good luck rather than to industry, he had acquired the necessary sum—all but £100. The remainder he said he hoped to obtain before many weeks were over, and so Florrie's parents allowed matters to proceed. The wedding was fixed for July, and everything was arranged, even to the printing of the invitation cards.

At the beginning of June there came a letter from Robert in which he explained that things had not turned out as he had hoped, and that, to his intense regret, the wedding must be postponed for another year at least.

"Oh! it is horrid and mean of him," exclaimed Florrie. "I did so want to be married this season, and what *will* people think of it?" So saying, she rushed for sympathy and advice to her sister Belle's room. Belle was a year or so older than Florrie, had studied at Girton, was very learned, and altogether despised such minor considerations as marriages.

"Well, my dear," she said, "if he can't manage it he can't, and you'll only have to grin and bear it till he can. However, I shouldn't make a fuss about it if I were you. Spilt milk, you know."

This speech was not calculated to soothe Florrie's ruffled feelings, and, seizing her hat and jacket, she rushed to seek relief in the outside world. But relief was not to be found, for no sooner had she left the doorstep than she saw, bearing down upon her, Miss Mackenzie, the bore of the neighbourhood. What should she do? She felt that she could not, in her present state of mind, bear the infliction of the old maid's platitudes. But how to escape them? Just then a hansom rattled down the street. In desperation she hailed it, and, by jumping into it, barely escaped the old lady's clutches.

"Where to, Miss?"

"Oh, anywhere!"

"Shall I drive yer down to Kempton, Miss?" said cabby, with an eye to business.

"Yes, yes, anywhere you please."

She settled herself comfortably on the cushions as the cab bowled swiftly through the streets, and was soon lost in thought.

Where was Kempton, though, by the way?

Oh, of course, she remembered now! She had once been to a certain pretty riverside village and recollected having seen written up at the station:

SUNBURY. ALIGHT HERE FOR KEMPTON PARK.

Yes, she would go and sit in the Park, and try and think matters out.

After an hour's drive, Florrie was surprised to find the cab draw up at some big white gates, through which a crowd of vehicles and foot-passengers was pressing.

"What are you stopping here for, cabman?"

"Why, Miss, this 'ere's Kempton Park, w'ere yer wanted to go to,"

"Good heavens, no! Why, it—it looks like a race-course."

"Lor, yus, Miss! Didn't yer know that?"

"Of course not! Drive me back at once, please!" exclaimed Florrie, sitting back in the cab, with as much show of indignation as she could manage.

"Well, yer may as well go in now yer *are* 'ere, don't yer think, Miss? It seems a pity not ter see the fun after coming sich a long way."

Florrie began to reflect. She had never been to a race-course in her life, and here was her chance. No one would be a bit the wiser, and she would find out if it really was such a wicked place as she had been brought up to believe.

Plucking up her courage she acquiesced in "cabby's" disinterested suggestion, and soon found herself within the enclosure, still, of course, seated in the cab, but facing a huge, ungainly erection filled with a shouting crowd. The horse had been taken from the shafts, which had been propped up against the railing in the usual way. This thing in front, cabby told her, was the grand stand. He proceeded to procure a card, showing what horses would run, but, as she found little in it to her taste, she amused herself by watching the curious-looking people round about, while her Jehu went away on some business of his own.

By-and-by back he came and said:

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"Well, Miss, what's your fancy for the first. I'm going to do a bit on *Verdigrease*."

Florrie stared. "Fancy! Do a bit!" Whatever could the man mean?

"Why, if yer cares to plank 'arf a thick 'un on 'im, I can get yer tens from a cove as I knows on. But p'raps you've got yer eye on somethink else."

"Really, I don't understand a word you are saying," replied the poor girl in amazement.

"Well, yer see, Miss, it's this way. If yer think *Verdigrease*, w'ich is a good 'orse, 'll win this first race, one o' them gents in white 'ats over there, as I 'appens to know, 'll bet yer five pounds to 'arf a quid that 'e wont."

"Will he, really? That's awfully kind of him. But I don't happen to know the gentleman."

"Never yer mind, Miss. If yer give me the money I'll work it for yer."

Just for the curiosity of the thing Florrie drew the coin from her purse and gave it to the man, who straightway vanished in the crowd. She looked on her card for the name of the horse she was now so suddenly and unexpectedly interested in, and found written beside it the following incomprehensible words, "*Puce, Strawberry Cap.*" Suddenly there was a commotion in the crowd, mounted constables cleared the course, and several horses cantered past, bearing on their backs men dressed in resplendent colours. The meaning of the words then flashed across her brain, and she instantly picked out *Verdigrease* by his brilliantly attired rider.

The crowd became quieter, and all looked expectantly at some distant point. Suddenly there was a cry of "They're off!" a bugle sounded, a bell rang, and almost directly, amid the wild yells of the crowd, all the horses dashed past her in a bunch. They were so mixed up, however, that for the life of her she could not tell which had won. In a few moments back came "Cabby," looking very jubilant, and informed her that their horse had won by a short neck, and greatly to her delight handed her five pounds along with her own half sovereign.

"Good gracious, Miss Baker!"

Just then a voice said:

"Good gracious, Miss Baker! whcever would have thought of seeing you here?"

Turning round to see who thus addressed her, Florrie saw, standing in front of the cab, Captain Wynford, of her brother's regiment. Greatly dismayed at being discovered under such circumstances, she hastened to explain, begging him to keep her secret. This, it need hardly be said, he readily promised, but laughed immoderately at her escapade, especially when she told him of the betting transaction with "Cabby."

"If you want to do anything more of that sort, though," said he, "you had better entrust the care of it to me. I think I can get you longer odds than 'cabby' can. Are you going to try your luck on this next race? I see they are putting the numbers up."

A wild idea rushed through Florrie's brain. Suppose she were to put a lot of money on and to win, and suppose she did it again and again and had great luck, why, she might make up that missing hundred pounds! What a surprise that would be for Robert! She looked again at her purse. There was in it now, counting her winnings, six pounds and a few shillings. She took the sovereigns out and said:

"Captain Wynford, will you do me a great favour? I want you to bet all this on a horse for me. It's for a special purpose."

Her friend smiled at the sudden increase in the stakes, and advised her to keep to smaller sums. As she persisted, however, he consented to do as she wished.

"You need not part with the cash, Miss Baker; I'm afraid I can't get you ready-money transactions in Tattersall's. I can settle with you to-morrow, anyway."

Florrie could hardly understand this trustfulness, much less the technical reference, but, presuming that it would be all right, asked him to back a horse which she picked out quite at random from the card. The race was run, and her luck still held, increasing her gains to £30 odd. All this she put on the next race, and, to cut a long story short, at the close of the meeting, owing to a wonderful continuance of good fortune, Florrie found herself the proud possessor of somewhat over the required £100. Captain Wynford saw her off in her cab, and congratulated her on her luck, promising to send her a cheque the next day.

On reaching home she dismissed the cabman with a tip that sent him on his way rejoicing, and slipped up to her room unperceived to write a note to Robert asking him to call that evening. When he came she informed him in an airy manner that she had a spare £100 of her own which she would add to what he had already in the bank in order that the wedding might come off as originally planned, carefully suppressing all details of how she happened to have such a sum to give away. She trusted that in his own interests he would not be likely to mention to her parents whence the sudden addition to his resources had been derived. Robert was greatly struck by her self-denial. Everything seemed to be turning out satisfactorily.

But, alas! it was not to be, for Belle suspected something, and, the next time Captain Wynford called, she wormed the whole story out of him under a solemn pledge of secrecy.

Needless to say, Robert soon had a highly coloured version of the affair given to him. Being, unfortunately for Florrie, of strict Puritanical up-bringing, he was greatly shocked at her unconventional behaviour. A painful scene took place between them, which we will pass over, and content ourselves with the bare statement that the engagement was broken off.

Regard for truth, however, compels us to add that Florrie soon recovered, and Captain Wynford, the partner in her "little gamble" had no great difficulty in persuading her to marry him in the Autumn.

Of Robert Carstairs it must be recorded that he rewarded Belle for disillusioning him regarding his first love by offering her his slightly damaged heart. But, as he had not yet succeeded in making that £100 himself, I am afraid Belle will have the humiliation of being married last, after all!

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His Little Whack

"I'M one-and-twenty, mother," said Charles Henry, "and I hanker after seeing the world, and——"

"Don't tell me," said his mother, "Don't tell me what you're hankerin' after. I know 'ithout tellin'. It's the fleshpots of Egypt! That's what you're after. You're about as fit as a spring chicken is to see the world. Jest about as fit to come up to the scratch, you poor innocent. You leave this foolishness and set to work cuttin' sticks. That's what Nature meant you to do, an' if you go agin Nature, she'll git even with you. Thar's a deal of solid religion in wood, especially when it ain't dry."

Charles Henry jingled his pocket suggestively. It was full of money. Then he walked to the window and gazed at the pretty English landscape, so familiar to him. "I'm sick of this old hen-roost," he said irritably, with a look of defiance in his ordinarily mild, blue eyes.

Mrs. Henry Hawkins reached over and jerked him back to the breakfast table. "While you're in this hen-roost, Charles Henry," she said, in tones which did not admit of dispute—"while you're in this hen-roost, I suspects you'll have to finish up the food set before you by the old hen."

Charles Henry meekly went on with his breakfast, but there was an obstinate look in the youth's face as he did so. Mrs. Henry Hawkins waited until he had finished, and then severely eyed him once more.

"It ain't no good, mother," said Charles Henry. "It ain't no good. It's time for me to go forth out of the wilderness, so to speak, and have my little whack. I want to see what's goin' on in the world, I do."

"You want to see what's goin' on in the world. Most people wants to shut their eyes to what's goin' on in the world. You let the world alone," said his mother. "It's been tumblin' about a good many years 'ithout your help. Your head's turned jest because your Uncle Jacob left you that twenty pounds."

Charles Henry again jingled his pocket.

"Well," said the old lady with subdued irony, "I reckon it's too much for you. You want to go and mingle with the fleshpots an' painted Isabels an' fleetin' joys of this world, an' spend all your money, an' then come back like the prodigy son. But you may jest make up your mind, Charles Henry, jest as sure as you're born, there'll be precious little veal on the premises for you when you git tired of running free an' comes crawlin' home full of husks after the manner of the Scripters."

Charles Henry had never before asserted himself. Now he had money in his pouch, and when a man has money in his pouch—especially a man of one-and-twenty—he is bound to assert himself. "Look here, mother," he said deliberately, "you've cooped me up all my life. I can't keep still any longer. I've got to move on. I want to see things for myself. What's it matter if I spend the money? What's anything matter? D'you want me to die because I'm tired of things? I hear voices calling me away into the world—the great, glorious world beyond this little village. I want to see it, taste it, to find out what it's like; and then I'll settle down and cut sticks and milk the cows, but I'm hanged if I'm going to do it till I've had my little whack."

"Go on," said his mother grimly. "Go on, Charles Henry. Have your little whack! Heap dust an' ashes on your sorrowin' parent."

"I don't want to heap ashes on anybody," said the literal Charles Henry.

"You're past praying for," Mrs. Hawkins ejaculated. "A whole army of parsons couldn't save you."

Charles Henry asserted himself. His tones were those of repressed passion. "You let me go my own way, mother. I dare say it's all true. But you can't understand—you can't understand. I must see it all. I want to go to London, and have a look round."

There was a momentary pause.

"Let me start, mother," the youth continued. "I'll have to. It's in my blood. I'll go mad if I don't. I see it all—feel it—hear it—dream of it nights. I must see what it's like. I'll come back again, mother; I'll come back. But I must go. It's a living grave here."

Mrs. Henry Hawkins gazed out of the window. The sun blazed fiercely down upon the little village which peeped out from among the trees across the swollen river.

There was a murmur of summer in the air, a rustle amid the growing grasses, the arrowy flight of a myriad of swallows over the roof of the barn, the bickering of innocent dickey birds as they flew about laden with straws and twigs for their nests. Over all was the wild, sweet joy of the sun-warmed air. The world was agog with life. Pulses quickened, the unutterable joy of it filled every heart—every heart save those of Charles Henry and his irate parent.

A young girl entered the room and stood carelessly swinging her sun-bonnet by its strings. Her blue eyes gazed questioningly at Charles Henry as he stood still, rattling the money in his pocket. She was clad in a pretty blue woollen dress, and looked about twenty. In addition, she stood three inches taller than Charles Henry, and could have lifted him up with one of her large, beautifully shaped hands.

Mary Jane leant against the door-post, her face paling a little as she realised the situation. "You needn't tell me," she said to Mrs. Hawkins; "I can see he's got the fidgets again. He'll have to go."

Mrs. Hawkins looked surprised. She had counted on an ally.

"Yes," said Mary calmly, "it's no use stopping him, Mrs. Hawkins. Let him go. He'll be glad enough to come back again."

Charles Henry did not meet his sweetheart's eye.

"Well," said Mrs. Hawkins resignedly, "if you say it, Mary, I s'pose he'll have to go. Don't cry out about it afterwards when he's seen some one else. Hasn't he said anything to you yet?"

The girl's cheeks flamed for a moment. She drew herself up with a superb gesture. "If he sees anyone he likes better than me," she said, "he's welcome to her." There was a touch of scorn in her voice which roused Charles Henry. What his mother's reproaches could not effect Mary Jane's had done in a second. "If you want me to stay," he said humbly, approaching her, as the sunlight played upon her hair—"if you want me to stay, I'll do it, Mary Jane."

There was an air of pathetic entreaty in Mrs. Hawkins' iron-featured face. The girl hesitated a moment. Then she laughed low and musically, displaying splendid teeth as she did so. She threw out her arm with a gesture of renunciation. "When I want you it will be easy enough to come after you. Go and see the world, Charles Henry Hawkins. You won't find anything like me in it."

And so it was arranged. Charles Henry started forth from the little homestead with twenty golden sovereigns in his pockets and a large bag in his hand. A procession of wondering villagers escorted him to the station, and one old lady gave him a bottle of raspberry vinegar to keep him from the refreshment bars as long as possible. Mary Jane declined

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to see him off. "You've got to go," she said, "and have your little whack, and get it over. Good-bye." And then she disappeared.

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Charles Henry roused himself from his couch and gazed apprehensively at the grey, grimy dawn as it streaked in through the tattered blinds of his simply furnished garret. Actuated by a desire to pass his enforced leisure in artistic pursuits, he had himself designed the mural decorations of his apartment with a piece of charcoal. The most stiking feature in the scheme of decoration was an effigy of Charles Henry, suspended from a branch of lofty elm by a hempen rope. Underneath this motionless figure were written the words, in Charles Henry's characteristic handwriting:

CHARLES HENRY HAWKINS,
Born 1st of April, 1873.
Did for himself, 1st April, 1894.
He was a PRIZE FOOL.

Charles Henry got out of bed and surveyed the effigy with grim satisfaction. As he gazed his sternness relaxed and a humorous twinkle took its place. "Well," he said with a sigh, "I've had a time and no mistake. Westminster Abbey, Houses of Parliament, Buckingham Palace, and the Tower—all the places I've read of at school—seen 'em all. They've been waiting for me ever since they were built, and I've seen 'em. What did I want to play cards for with confidence men and dissipate my substance—Uncle Jacob's twenty pounds—in riotous living? I dunno. I s'pose it was part of the time. But I ain't got a farthin' left. And I've had nothing to eat 'cept an orange for two days. I can't live on Buckingham Palace and Westminster Abbey and munch a slice out of the Tower. No, no, I've got to get something to eat or die. I can't wire to mother because nobody will lend me the money. Wonder if there is anything I can pawn?"

He felt in his pockets in a perfunctory way as if knowing what the result would be. "Waistcoat went last week," he said, addressing the effigy. "Last week. What am I to do now? There's a good deal in that prodigal son business of mother's. I reckon I'm emptier than he ever felt. But I have had a good time."

He dipped his curly head in a basin of water, and looked for his boots. They were not to be seen. "I couldn't have pawned them in my sleep," he said, staggering against the wall. "I'm beginning to see double. Wouldn't mother crow over me if she could see me now."

Suddenly his face brightened. "I promised her to get back a month ago, and she said if I didn't turn up in time she'd come and fetch me. Wonder if she'll do it. She'll have to come quick or there won't be enough of me to make a shadow."

He fell to counting the days. "She'd give me a week extra or a fortnight, and then come straight along," said Charles Henry reflectively. "Oh, yes, she'll come! But how am I to get along now?"

Then he looked round for his boots again, and someone knocked at the door.

Charles Henry reeled slightly as he opened the door. "It's you, is it?" This to the grimy slavey, an untidy girl, about sixteen, with tangled red hair and a profusion of blacklead and boot polish impartially spread over her expressive features.

"Yus, it's me," the girl said. "Who else did yer think it was?—the parish beadle! 'Ere's yer boots. Missus cribbed 'em when you was asleep last night and told me to lock 'em up."

Charles Henry received his boots with a forlorn attempt at jocosity. "She was afraid I'd spoil them with too much walking, I suppose?" he asked in a whisper.

"Yus," said the slavey. "And she says to Mrs. Parker wot lives next door, if you don't pay up to-morrer, she's a-goin' to chuck yer."

"She's strong enough," said Charles Henry, sighing.

The slavey produced a big slice of bread and butter, from under her apron. "You ain't a bad sort," she said. "Ketch 'old, and tuck into it."

Charles Henry was very hungry, but he was also proud. "It's your breakfast isn't it?" he asked.

"No," said the slavey, lying hard. "It's for you. I 'ad corfee and sassidges hours and hours ago."

"Do you think," said Charles Henry—"do you think, you poor little duffer, I'm going to rob you of the food you do get? Never. Don't lie like that."

With a dexterous movement the slavey repossessed herself of Charles Henry's boots. "If you don't eat," she said, "I'll lock 'm up again."

Charles Henry was forced to comply. He ate ravenously. "I should like to have the honour of shaking hands with you," he said solemnly when he had finished. "I have renewed my strength like the eagle."

"Orl right," said the slavey. "Your beak's gettin' very like an eagle's." And they shook hands.

That night after a long tramp in the streets, Charles Henry staggered heavily back to his garret. "I'll try to go to sleep," he said. "It will make the time pass quicker. It's a race between death and mother; but I've had a good time, a very good time; but when mother makes a start she generally wins." He slept for an hour. Then he again awoke, with that terrible craving for food. "I've had enough of the world," he said to the effigy opposite. "If I once get back to the farm I'll cut firewood for the rest of my days. Who's there?" Someone had knocked.

"It's me," said a well-known voice.

Charles Henry dissembled his emotion and tottered to the door. But Mrs. Hawkins could not dissemble hers. She drew him to her breast, cried over him, and patted his curly head, and nearly smothered him with kisses. Then she let him go, and Mary Jane shyly advanced. "I told you I'd come and fetch you when I wanted you," was all she said; "and here I am."

Charles Henry, with one supreme heroic effort, momentarily staved off the pangs of hunger. "I have had a time," he said, "a grand time: Houses of Parliament, Madame Tussaud's, Salvation Army, the Tower, and Zoological Gardens. Sit down on the bed, mother, and I'll tell you all about it."

Mary Jane looked at his thin cheeks for a moment, as Mrs. Hawkins glanced around the barren den.

"Well, you are a prodigy son!" said Mrs. Hawkins, ashamed to have let her feelings get the better of her.

"Hush!" said Mary Jane. "You don't understand. It's the fashion in London to get as high as you can, and the higher you get the more miserable you look. Charles Henry, you just go on telling your mother all about the sights, and I'll order dinner. Then we'll go round afterwards."

Mary Jane bustled about and achieved wonders. Ten minutes later a table and two chairs appeared in front of the diminutive slavey. Twenty minutes later Charles Henry sat before a somewhat rude but plentiful meal, suffering exquisite tortures as he waited for his mother to commence. It was with difficulty that he could restrain himself from tearing the food with his fingers—from rending it like a wild beast. Then he began to eat, and Mary's tears ran down into the potatoes.

Mrs. Hawkins was too short-sighted to notice this gratuitous but temperate addition to the meal. "Seems to me with all that money you didn't ought to be lodged up here," she said. "I reckon 'taint as good as our barn. How much have you got left?"

"More than twenty pounds, I think," said Mary Jane. "There's his purse lying on the bed half open."

Mrs. Hawkins was mollified. "Sakes," she said; "if I didn't oughter 'pologise. Charles Henry, I'm proud of you. You're real level-headed. An' it ain't taken away your appetite neither."

Charles Henry tried to explain, but Mary Jane put her finger to her lips, and Mrs. Hawkins never knew.

Charles Henry "hankered" after the flesh-pots no more. To cut firewood for Mary Jane was happiness enough, and when a man has grasped a truth like that, earth, air, and sky are his attendant ministers, who do his bidding and teach him all the joys of life.

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The White Lady of Machow

DURING the last Polish revolution, the artillery captain, Baron Greisenek, of Tornopol, where his regiment was stationed, was dispatched to Machow with a troop of Hussars, to guard the frontier, and prevent the insurgents from crossing over from Galicia into Russia.

It was a lovely summer's evening when he arrived; the full moon was rising above the horizon, and the stars shone clear and bright above the round tower of the castle, which lay on a gentle rise behind the village.

Baron Greisenek stationed his vedettes along the frontier line (so far, indeed, to the right and left, that they reached the next body of troops), saluted the Cossack in command, quartered his men in the surrounding villages, and then betook himself, with his old sergeant, Madorassie, and half a troop of Hussars, up the gentle ascent to the Castle of Machow. The latter was an extensive edifice, with high, moss-grown walls, and round, massive towers, which reminded one more of a castle on the Dardanelles than a German castle on the Rhine. The moon cast a blue light over it, rendering it more mysterious-looking. The gates were closed. It appeared empty and deserted; no sound was audible, save from time to time the melancholy cry of a nightbird.

The captain signalled to the trumpeter to blow a blast. The shrill, cheerful notes rang out in the still night, and aroused countless bats and owls in the ruined walls, which flew whirling round the heads of the Hussars.

At the third blast of the bugle, steps were heard, a bunch of keys rattled, and at last the door creakingly turned upon its hinges. An old man in the Polish dress of the previous century, with a weather-beaten face and a long white beard, stood before the captain, and greeted him respectfully. Greisenek demanded quarters for himself and his men.

"The castle, with all it contains," said the old man solemnly, "is at your orders, sir. I have only to ask you not to take it ill if your rest, and that of your men, is somewhat disturbed at night." He drew nearer the Baron, and added, in a whisper, "there are ghosts in the castle."

The White Lady raised a warning hand.

"What?"

"The 'White Lady of Machow' is seen now and again."

"Soldiers know no fear!" exclaimed Greisenek laughing, "and least of all are we afraid of pretty women, and the 'White Lady of Machow' must have been handsome indeed if she is doing penance for her sins to-day. Forward!"

The Hussars rode into the courtyard; the gates were shut; the horsemen dismounted and led their horses to the stables. The windows and corridors were lit up by the moonlight, but only a single light was visible, and that was on the ground floor.

"Is the castle uninhabited?" inquired the Baron, whilst the old man held a lantern to light him up the broad steps of the castle.

"My master, Herr Krosnowski and his lady and daughter are living in Lemberg; the young master, I believe, is in Paris."

"Or with the insurgents yonder?"

"It is possible. I am here alone as the castle steward."

The old man opened a lofty, iron-bound door on the ground floor, and led the way through a suite of empty rooms, the walls of which were hung with old pictures, to a spacious apartment on one side of which ran an open gallery, approached by a winding staircase. This great room was adorned with life-size portraits, mythological paintings, Dutch flower and fruit pieces, ancient Polish, as well as Turkish, Mongolian, and Servian weapons, and old damask-covered furniture. In the centre stood a round table, with a cover spread for one person, and against the wall was a four-post bed prepared for the night. It looked as though the soldiers had been expected.

The Baron made himself comfortable, ate and drank, and praised the culinary skill of the steward, who waited on him attentively.

"I was four years in Paris with my master," said the old man. "I learnt to cook there."

"After this soup I could believe," thought the Baron, "that the castle is not uninhabited as it appears. Evidently the inmates intend to have no dealings with imperial officers. Well, so be it."

Then, turning to the old man, he said:

"What is this story about a woman in white?"

The steward took a candelabra and led the captain to the picture of a strangely beautiful woman, whose tall figure was wrapped from head to foot in a fur mantle. From the dark background looked out a pale face with proud blue eyes and full red lips, from beneath the fur-bordered cap fell rich, red-gold tresses like fiery snakes.

"That is she," said the steward, "The Wojewodin Barbara Krosnowski. She lived in the days of King

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Segismund Augustus, and was a sinful woman. God rest her soul."

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When the steward had left him, Greisenek carefully examined the whole apartment, and with this object mounted to the gallery above. He could discover nothing suspicious. After bolting the two doors, he laid his loaded pistols on the bed and went to sleep. He was aroused at midnight by the hollow strokes of the castle clock, and sat up to look round him. The entire room was lit up by the moon; the high windows were sharply defined against the panelled walls, the weapons shone with unnatural brilliancy, the portraits appeared like living persons, and the beautiful Barbara Krosnowski seemed to gaze at him with a threatening look in her blue eyes, and a scornful smile on her full lips, and when a sharp current of air swept through the vast room, and fanned his hot cheeks, he fancied he could see the hair of her furs wave gently.

He fell back and lay thinking for a long while, the oppressive silence stimulating his imagination, until the portraits seemed to step from their frames and hold converse with one another. He could hear their regular breathing and their low voices as they talked together, looking towards him now and then, and pointing, just for all the world as if they were discussing his presence in the old castle, with his men.

He started up suddenly from his reverie, bathed in a cold perspiration. The phantom shapes were there no longer, and from their frames the ghostly faces of the strange people, illuminated by the sickly rays of the moon, looked down upon him.

"I am only angry that you should be already betrothed," replied the Baron, kissing her hand.

A slight jarring noise directed his attention to the upper part of the wall at the far end of the room.

And now he noticed that the wall high up at the end of the gallery had opened, and he saw a form clad in white flowing robes sweep through it. Half-terrified, half-curious, he rose and fixed his gaze on the apparition, as it stood a moment in the cold light of the moon, looking straight into the face of the beautiful Barbara. It was the same lovely face, with the same proud blue eyes, framed in golden tresses, only the blue eyes no longer smiled seductively, but wore a look of gentle, wistful gravity. He seized his pistols involuntarily and cocked the trigger, but the white lady raised a warning hand, and vanished silently and swiftly from the other end of the gallery, where the wall, at her approach, opened and closed in mysterious silence after her.

It was long before the Baron fell asleep. When he awoke in the morning he questioned whether he had been dreaming, or had really seen the strange apparition. Beside him lay the pistol, with the trigger still cocked. He had certainly in the night made ready to fire.

But might not the full moon have played him a trick? He had just finished dressing as his old servant entered and put an end to his doubts.

"I have to report, captain," began the sergeant, "that the guard on the frontier has remained according to orders, and nothing suspicious has been seen, and nothing particular has occurred, but 'tis all as it should be here in the castle, captain."

"What, have you, too, seen something?"

"Terenz, who had the stable guard at midnight, declares a woman was walking up and down the corridors of the castle; in the courtyard, and in the garden, steps and voices were heard; the horses were restless, and your bay mare, sir, broke loose. They say the horses scented the ghost."

As Greisenek rode off to inspect his guards in the vaulted gateway, he met the steward,

"I say, fellow," he cried excitedly, "I've seen her!"

"Whom, your honour?"

"The White Lady of Machow!"

The steward crossed himself.

"That means nothing good," he muttered. "May no evil befall us!"

"Bah! we're not afraid."

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That night the ghost appeared a second time. On the stroke of twelve the White Lady stood once more in the gallery, raised her hand in warning, and vanished. She was seen by the Hussars, and the horses were as restless as before.

On the third night the troops received an alarm. A small body of insurgents appeared on the further side of the frontier; the Cossacks drew back, shots were exchanged, and flames were visible on the eastern horizon. Greisenek returned home an hour before midnight, took a hasty meal, and threw himself dressed upon his bed.

It suddenly occurred to him that this time he would wait for the ghost and address her. He rose, bolted the door, satisfied himself that his pistols were loaded, placed them in his belt, and ascended the winding stair. In the gallery he chose a projecting pillar for a hiding-place, and then awaited courageously, but with some excitement, the apparition of the White Lady.

With the first stroke of midnight, the wall opened, and the lovely ghost appeared. The Baron's heart beat fast, and he held his breath. Only two steps removed from him, the White Lady stood still, and looked down into the room below. With sudden determination, Greisenek stepped out from behind the pillar and seized in his arms a slim, living form.

"Holy Mary!" murmured a sweet, woman's voice, and two large blue eyes looked beseechingly into his.

"Fräulein Krosnowski?" said the captain.

"You know me?"

"The resemblance to your ancestress, the White Lady, is so striking.

"I entreat you not to betray me," murmured the beautiful vision. "I am betrothed to one whom my parents refuse to allow me to marry, whom they will not even permit to enter the house. For a year I have played the White Lady of Machow, only that I might be able to see him and speak with him for a moment. Well, I am in your power."

"My dear Madame, what can you think of me?" replied Greisenek. "Never could I, to whom chance has intrusted your secret, betray your confidence! Go your way without fear. How I envy him who awaits you!"

The girl smiled mischievously. The same instant a hollow sound came from the courtyard.

"What is that?" exclaimed the captain.

"Nothing, nothing," replied Fräulein Krosnowski, hastily; "'tis only my faithful steward, who is in my confidence, and

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plays the ghost to your Hussars, in order that I may reach the garden unperceived. Farewell."

"Shall I never see you again?"

The girl hesitated an instant.

"Yes," she said, giving him her hand, "you shall see me again if you will promise not to follow me, and not to quit this room before morning."

"I give you my word of honour."

"Then, farewell."

She vanished, and Greisenek again threw himself on the bed. Early in the morning he was awakened by his servant. With the latter appeared a Jew, who brought news that during the night a large troop of insurgents had assembled in Castle Machow, and had succeeded in crossing the border. Greisenek struck his forehead. He had been betrayed by the White Lady of Machow. His general sent for him, and awarded him a month's arrest.

One day he found on his window-sill a stone wrapped in paper.

Opening it, he read:

"BARON,—I am truly grieved that you have to suffer for my delinquency; maybe the thought that you are suffering for me will console you. You kept your word, I will keep mine.

"THE WHITE LADY OF MACHOW."

The day Greisenek regained his liberty a Jew visited him, and informed him, with an air of mystery, that a good friend of his would be waiting for him at eight in the evening in the courtyard of the Castle Bakowza. There was nothing improbable in such an incitation. More than one former Austrian officer was fighting in the ranks of the insurgents, who, if brought back wounded across the frontier, would throw themselves on the mercy of their former comrades. So Greisenek rode unaccompanied to Bakowza, distant only about an hour from headquarters, and, at the appointed hour, dismounted before the castle. It was a fine but cool autumn evening; the sky starlit, and silence reigned around. A boy came out and led away his horse.

As the Captain approached the castle, a tall, slight figure, leaning on the baluster of the broad steps, rose before him.

It was Fräulein Krosnowski, who gave him her hand.

"Are you angry with me?" she begun.

"I am only angry that you should be already betrothed," replied the Baron, kissing her hand. "How gladly would I have been thy slave."

"I am not betrothed," exclaimed the girl, laughing merrily. "Not betrothed!"

Greisenek threw his arms around her, and this time her rosy lips did not refuse to meet his. The same winter, the White Lady of Machow became the Baroness Greisenek.

The Harmony Chime

MANY years ago, in a large foundry in the city of Ghent, was found a young workman by the name of Otto Holstein. He was not nineteen years of age, but none of the workmen could equal him in his special department—bell casting, or moulding. Far and near the fame of Otto's bells extended, the clearest and sweetest, people said, that were ever heard.

Of course, the great establishment of Von Erlangen, in which Otto worked, got the credit of his labours; but Von Erlangen and Otto himself knew very well to whom the superior tone of the bells was due. The master did not pay him higher wages than the others, but by degrees he grew to be general superintendent in his department in spite of his extreme youth.

"Yes, my bells are good," he said to a friend one day who was commenting upon their merits; "but they do not make the music I will yet strike from them. They ring alike for all things. To be sure, when they toll for a funeral the slow measure makes them *seem* mournful, but then the notes are really the same as in a wedding peal. I shall make a chime of bells that will sound at will every chord in the human soul."

"Then wilt thou deal in magic," said his friend, laughing; "and the Holy Inquisition will have somewhat to do with thee. No human power can turn a bell into a musical instrument."

"But I can," he answered, briefly; "and Inquisition or not, I will do it."

He turned abruptly from his friend and sauntered, lost in thought, down the narrow street which led to his home. It was a humble, red-tiled cottage, of only two rooms, that he had inherited from his grandfather. There he lived alone with his widowed mother. She was a mild, pleasant-faced woman, and her eyes brightened as her son bent his tall head under the low doorway, as he entered the little room. "Thou art late, Otto," she said, "and in trouble, too," as she caught sight of his grave, sad face.

"Yes," he answered, "when I asked Herr Erlangen for an increase of salary, for my work grows harder every day, he refused it. Nay, he told me if I was not satisfied, I could leave, for there were fifty men ready to take my place. Ready! yes, I warrant they're ready enough, but to be *able* is a different thing."

His mother sighed deeply.

"Thou will not leave Herr Erlangen's, surely. It is little we get, but it keeps us in food."

"I must leave," he answered. "Nay, do not cry out, mother! I have other plans, and thou wilt not starve. Monsieur Dayrolles, the rich Frenchman, who lives in the Linden-Strasse, has often asked me why I do not set up a foundry of my own. Of course, I laughed—I who never have a thaler to spend; but he told me he and several other rich friends of his would advance the means to start me in business. He is a great deal of his time at Erlangen's, and is an enthusiast about fine bells. Ah! we are great friends, and I am going to him after supper."

"People say he is crazy," said his mother.

"Crazy!" indignantly. "People say that of everybody who has ideas they can't understand. They say *I* am crazy when I talk of my chime of bells. If I stay with Erlangen, he gets the credit of my work; but my chime must be mine, mine alone, mother!" His eyes lighted with a kind of wild enthusiasm whenever he talked on this subject.

His mother's cheerful face grew sad, as she laid her hand on his shoulder.

"Why, Otto, thou art not thyself when thou speakest of those bells."

"More my real self, mother, than at any other time!" he cried. "I only truly live when I think of how my idea is to be carried out. It is to be my life's work; I know it, I feel it. It is upon me that my fate is woven inextricably in that ideal chime. It is God-sent. No great work but the maker is possessed wholly by it. Don't shake your head, mother. Wait till my 'Harmony Chime' sounds from the great cathedral belfry, and then shake it, if you can."

His mother smiled faintly.

"Thou art a boy—a mere child, Otto, though a wonderful genius I must confess. Thy hopes delude thee, for it would take a lifetime to carry out thine idea."

"Then let it take a lifetime!" he cried vehemently. "Let me accomplish it when I am too old to hear it distinctly, and I will be content that its first sounds toll my dirge. I must go now to Monsieur Dayrolles. Wish me good luck, dearest mother," and he stooped and kissed her tenderly.

Otto did not fail. The strange old man in his visits to the foundry had noticed the germs of genius in the boy, and grown

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very fond of him. He was so frank, so honest, so devoted to his work, and had accomplished so much at his early age, that Monsieur Dayrolles saw a brilliant future before him.

Besides, the old gentleman, with a Frenchman's vanity, felt that if the "Harmony Chime" *could* be made, the name of the munificent patron would go down to posterity with that of the maker. He believed firmly that the boy some day would accomplish his purpose. So, although the revolt of the Netherlands had begun, and he was preparing to return to his own country, he advanced the necessary funds, and saw Otto established in business before he quitted Ghent.

In a very short time work poured in upon Otto. During that long and terrible war the manufacture of cannon alone made the fortunes of the workers in iron. So, five years from the time he left Von Erlangen, we find Otto Holstein a rich man at twenty-four years of age. But the idea for which he laboured had never for a moment left his mind. Sleeping or waking, toiling or resting, his thoughts were busy perfecting the details of the great work.

"Thou art twenty-four to-day, Otto," said his good mother, "and rich beyond our hopes. When wilt thou bring Gertrude home to me? Thou hast been betrothed now for three years, and I want a daughter to comfort my declining years. Thou doest thy betrothed maiden a grievous wrong to delay without cause. The gossips are talking already."

"Let them talk," laughed Otto. "Little do Gertrude or I care for their silly tongues. She and I have agreed that the 'Harmony Chime' is to usher in our marriage day. Why, good mother, no man can serve two mistresses, and my chime has the oldest claim. Let me accomplish it, and then the remainder of my life belongs to Gertrude, and thou, too, best of mothers."

He loved his mother, but he seemed now to forget her in the feverish eagerness with which he threw himself into his labours. He had been a devoted lover to Gertrude, but he now never had a spare moment to give to her—in fact, he only seemed to remember her existence in connection with the peal which would ring in their wedding day. His labours were prolonged far over the appointed time, and meanwhile the internal war raged more furiously, and the Netherlands were one vast battle-field. No interest did Otto seem to take in the stirring events around him. The bells held his whole existence captive.

At last the moulds were broken, and the bells came out of their husks perfect in form, and shining as stars in Otto's happy eyes. They were mounted in the great belfry, and for the test-chime Otto had employed the best bell-ringers in the city.

It was a lovely May morning, and almost crazed with excitement and anxiety, Otto, accompanied by a few chosen friends, waited outside the city for the first notes of the "Harmony Chime." At some distance he thought he could better judge of the merits of his work.

At last the first notes were struck, clear, sonorous, and so melodious that his friends cried aloud with delight. But with finger upraised for silence, and eyes full of ecstatic delight, Otto stood like a statue until the last note died away. Then his friends caught him as he fell forward in a swoon—a swoon so like death that no one thought he would recover.

But it was not death, and he came out of it with a look of serene peace on his face that it had not worn since boyhood. He was married to Gertrude that very day, but every one noticed that the ecstasy which transfigured his face seemed to be drawn more from the sound of the bells than the sweet face beside him.

"Don't you see a spell is cast on him as soon as they begin to ring?" said one, after the bells had ceased to be a wonder. "If he is walking, he stops short; and if he is working, the work drops, and a strange fire comes in his eyes; and I have seen him shudder all over as if he had an ague."

In good truth the bells seemed to have drawn a portion of Otto's life to them. When the incursions of the war forced him to fly from Ghent with his family, his regrets were not for his injured property, but that he could not hear the bells.

He was absent two years, and when he returned it was to find the cathedral almost a ruin, and the bells gone no one knew where. From that moment a settled melancholy took possession of Otto. He made no attempt to retrieve his losses; in fact, he gave up work altogether, and would sit all day with his eyes fixed on the ruined belfry.

People said he was melancholy mad, and, I suppose, it was the truth, but he was mad with a kind of gentle patience, very sad to see. His mother had died during their exile; and now his wife, unable with all her love to rouse him from his torpor, faded slowly away. He did not notice her sickness, and his poor numbed brain seemed imperfectly to comprehend her death. But he followed her to the grave, and, turning from it, moved slowly down the city, passed the door of his old home without looking at it, and went out of the city gates.

After that he was seen in every city in Europe at different intervals. Charitable people gave him alms, but he never begged. He would enter a town, take his station near a church, and wait until the bells rang for matins or vespers, then take up his staff and, sighing deeply, move off.

Years rolled over the head of the wanderer, but still his slow march continued. His hair had grown white, and his strength had failed him so much that he only tottered instead of walked, but still that wistful seeking look was in his eyes.

One glorious evening in midsummer he was crossing a river in Ireland. The kind-hearted boatman had been moved by the old man's imploring gestures to take him over. "He's mighty nigh his end, anyhow," he muttered, looking at the feeble movements of the old pilgrim as he stumbled to his seat.

Suddenly through the evening air came the distant sound of a melodious chime. At the first note the pilgrim leapt to his feet and threw up his arms.

"Found!" he cried, "found at last!"

"It's the bells of the convent," said the wondering man, not understanding Otto's words spoken in a foreign tongue, but answering his gesture. "They were brought from somewhere in Holland, when they were fighting there. Moighty fine bells they are, too. But he isn't listening to me."

No, he heard nothing but the bells. He merely whispered, "Come back to me after so many years! Oh, love of my soul! Oh, thought of my life! Peal on, for your voices tell me of Paradise."

The last note floated through the air, and as it died away something else soared aloft for ever—free from the clouds and struggles of life.

Otto lay dead, his face full of peace and joy, for the weary quest of his crazy brain was over, and the "Harmony Chime" had called him to his eternal rest.

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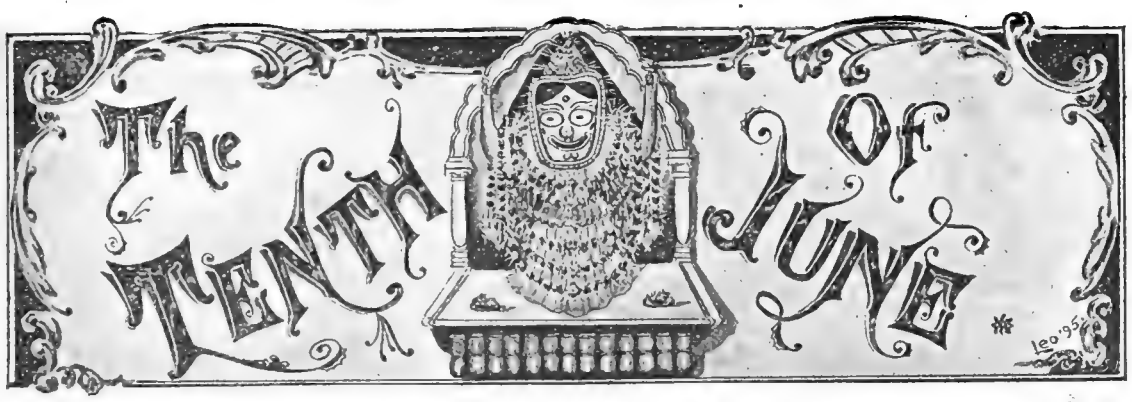

By John K. Leys, *Author of "In the Toils," "My Hindoo Friend," &c., &c.—Illustrated by* Raymond Potter.

SUMMARY.

Geoffrey Dundas—A young barrister.
Sir Arthur Chetwynd—A retired general and friend of Geoffrey.
Leila Chetwynd—His daughter.
Captain Byngham—An army officer, and cousin to Sir Arthur.
Lord Lavington—A friend of the General.
Amavati, the Rajah of Nagore—A Hindoo prince who visits Sir Arthur, and develops an unrequited love for Leila.
Chunder Sen—The Rajah's secretary.
Kuttapani—The Rajah's cook

During the Indian Mutiny Sir Arthur, together with Geoffrey's father (since dead), took part in the looting of a Hindoo temple on the tenth of June, and on this day every year afterwards one of the Englishmen concerned, or some member of their families, is assassinated. On the last day of May, 1884, Amavati, the Rajah of Nagore, visits Sir Arthur, and Geoffrey tells him of the danger which threatens himself and the General's household. In view of the condition of affairs, Sir Arthur visits his lawyer to make his will, and, learning from him that his cousin, Captain Byngham, to whom he had intended to marry Leila, is almost penniless, though representing himself to be rich, wills him but a small annuity. Chunder Sen makes it possible for Byngham to surreptitiously examine the will, and promises to help him out of the difficulty. On the tenth of June Geoffrey goes to Wales, and is followed by Kuttapani, who attacks him in a lonely spot and leaves him for dead. Geoffrey, however, recovers, and follows him.

CHAPTER XII.

On the Track.

There was no great difficulty in following the Hindoo down the slope and along the valley, for he never once looked back; and Geoffrey took care to keep a good way behind. Gradually, as the country became cultivated, and cover in the shape of trees and hedges became more plentiful, he ventured to draw a little nearer.

But when the sun went down and the shadows began to lengthen, the difficulty of keeping the Hindoo in sight without going too close to him became very great. By this time Geoffrey was greatly exhausted. He had walked continuously since daybreak, except for the short rest he had taken beside the pool; and the excitement which had sustained him when he was struggling to save his life had now died away. His injured shoulder, too, gave him a good deal of trouble. But the Indian glided on, stealing like a baleful shadow through the unfrequented lanes and field paths, as if he were incapable of feeling fatigue.

They were by this time a long way from the mountain which had witnessed the attempted murder; and Geoffrey had lost his landmarks entirely. Still he pressed on wondering what town or railway-station the Hindoo could be making for.

The country was now well wooded, but the farmhouses were few and far between, and the roads were nearly deserted. Once or twice, however, Geoffrey met a hay-maker, or a farmer's wife coming home from market; and he never failed to ask them whether they had met a dark-coloured man. The reply always was that the man was a little way ahead; and Geoffrey was content, feeling sure that Kuttapani had no idea he was being followed, and would not try to evade pursuit.

But when twilight merged into darkness Geoffrey felt that at any risk he must keep closer to the man he was "shadowing." He walked on rapidly, therefore, for some minutes, but to his surprise he did not overtake the Hindoo. Then he began to run, and ran on steadily for perhaps a mile. Still no one was visible.

Geoffrey was perplexed and vexed beyond measure. It seemed as if he must in some way have passed the man. Could he have been taken up in any vehicle and carried on? It was possible, but not likely, for no cart, gig, or carriage had come by for some time. Could he have gone out of the road to ask his way at the door of some farmhouse? That seemed the most likely explanation. But in that case the Hindoo would in a few minutes overtake his "shadow," meet him face to face. Clearly that would not do.

For the last mile and a half the road had been bordered on the right by a plantation of young beech trees. There could hardly be a farmhouse in that direction; but it was possible that some lane on the left, which had remained unnoticed in the darkness, might lead to one.

At any rate it seemed clear to Geoffrey that he had overshot his mark, that Kuttapani must be now behind him; and that the best thing he could do was to sit down and wait for him. So he pushed his way through the hedge that separated the plantation from the road, and choosing a position from which he could see any one passing along the road, he sat down with his back to a tree.

Worn out with fatigue and faint with hunger as he was, the mere rest was delicious. He found that he had to change his position constantly, or he would have fallen asleep.

A farmer's wife.

After waiting for half an hour he rose, feeling stiff and sore. No one had passed along the road. It was plain to Geoffrey that he had lost the trail. In all probability the Hindoo was camping out for the night in the very wood on the border of which he was standing. But to trace him was of course impossible.

There was just one chance left, and that was to make for the nearest railway-station. The next day being Sunday no trains ran on the little branch line which served the district; and it seemed probable that the Hindoo would wait in the neighbourhood till Monday morning. At any rate it was evident that nothing

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Sat down with his back to a tree.

more could be done that night. So Geoffrey limped on till he came to a small roadside public-house, and there, with some difficulty, he found shelter for the night.

Before going to bed he treated his injured shoulder and his swollen feet with the old-fashioned remedy—a mixture of melted butter and spirits—and found that next morning he was able to dress himself, and move about, without much inconvenience.

After breakfast he inquired for the nearest railway-station. It was only four miles off, so he walked over in the course of the day, and found beside the station a new red-brick "hotel." Here he rested for the remainder of the day.

On Monday morning Geoffrey rose at five and made a survey of the railway-station and its approaches. The one small waiting-room had a window which commanded a view of the road; and as soon as the place was open he took up his station at the window. His plan was to buy a first-class ticket as soon as the booking-clerk arrived; and the moment he caught sight of Kuttapani he would take his seat in one of the carriages—which were already drawn up at the platform—and pull down the blinds. The Hindoo would probably travel second or third class; and it was unlikely that he would look into the first-class compartments.

The minutes passed; and a bell rang. Still no sign of the Hindoo.

Geoffrey took out his watch, still keeping his eye on the road.

"Take your seat, sir, please," said the guard, putting his head into the room. "Are you expecting someone?" he added.

Geoffrey hardly heard him, so keen was his anxiety.

"No—that is, yes," he answered confusedly. "I expected a man I know will travel by this train."

"Any one in sight, Joe?" the guard called out to a porter who occupied a better look-out on the top of a truck.

"Not a living soul," answered the lad.

Geoffrey turned from the window in despair, and allowed the guard to hurry him into a compartment. His plan had failed! He could not even make up his mind whether it would be better for him to go on, or to remain where he was. The train had started before he had come to a decision. The only chance left, so far as he saw, was to go to Paddington and watch the arrival of the trains there; and that was a chance so slender that it seemed only one degree better than nothing.

At the third station the train stopped at, Geoffrey thought he might as well try to get a newspaper. He stood up, to let down the window, just as the carriages ran past the signal-box at the end of the platform. Before the window fell into its place he had passed before the Hindoo's eyes!

Kuttapani was standing by himself at one end of the platform, watching the train as it swept in.

"Has he seen me?" was the question that tormented Geoffrey for some time afterwards. On the whole it seemed most likely that the Hindoo had not seen the man he had gone out to slay.

Though about to stop, the train was running pretty fast at the moment. The Englishman's face was on a higher level than his enemy's; and, above all, the Hindoo was merely looking out for a vacant place; he was not searching for any one; least of all for the man who, he believed, was lying stark and cold at the bottom of a tarn on Penrhyllbach. Trembling all over with a curious excitement, Geoffrey resumed his seat.

Till the train reached Paddington he never left the carriage. Feeling certain that the Hindoo was on board the train, he contented himself with glancing out at each station at which they stopped, to see whether Kuttapani had left the train. As Geoffrey's carriage happened to be in the front part of the train, there was no great difficulty or risk in doing this.

At length they reached the Paddington terminus. Before the carriages were brought to a standstill Geoffrey had leaped out and was talking to the driver of the fastest looking of the cab-horses in waiting.

"There's a Hindoo arriving by that train," he said. "If you follow him quietly till he gets home, I'll give you five shillings in addition to your fare."

"All right, sir."

Geoffrey went round to the other side of the hansom, so as to be hidden from the crowd who were pouring out of the carriages on to the platform, and waited. The minutes passed, and the cabman made no sign.

"Don't you see him? He *must* be there!" said Geoffrey, in an excited whisper.

The man took a last long survey of the platform, and then bent down to say—"Not arrived, sir. I'll take my dyin' oath no gentleman o' colour has alighted from that there train."

Geoffrey was intensely mortified. He had been favoured by fortune to an unusual degree, and he told himself he had simply thrown his chances away.

He handed the cabman five shillings, and walked moodily away.

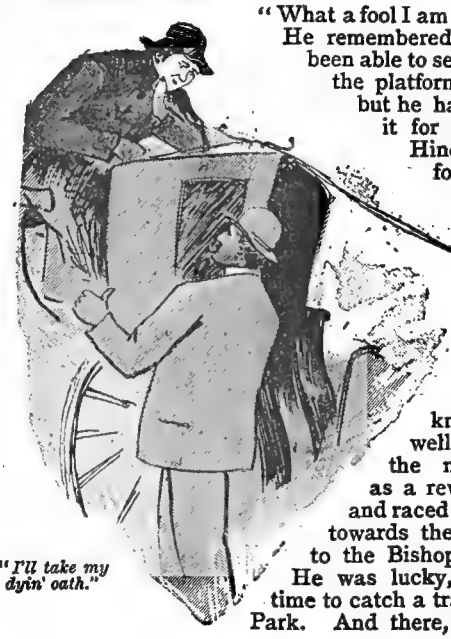
The cab-driver called after him.

"Well?"

"Don't you think it's possible your friend may 'ave got out at Westbourne Park?"

"What a fool I am!" cried Geoffrey. He remembered that he had not been able to see all the way along the platform at that station; but he had somehow taken it for granted that the Hindoo would make for London itself.

The cabman smiled superior. "Jump inside, sir," said the man. "I'll take you there quicker than the train."



"I'll take my dyin' oath."

But Geoffrey knew London too well for this. He gave the man half-a-crown as a reward for his hint, and raced along the platform towards the bridge that leads to the Bishop's Road platform. He was lucky, arriving just in time to catch a train to Westbourne Park. And there, to his great joy,

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One of the passengers was the Hindoo.

he came upon a trace of the Hindoo. The ticket-collector at the exit had noticed his colour. But the man could give him no further information beyond the fact that he did not think the Oriental had taken a cab.

"We pretty often has these Indian gen'l'men come this way," said the man; and that was all he could tell.

To search for a man who had had twenty minutes' start in the wilderness of North-West London seemed to Geoffrey a mad undertaking. Yet he did not quite give up hope. If Kuttapani used the Westbourne Park Station, and walked home from it, he must live within—say, two miles of it. He must use it occasionally. It would only be necessary to watch the station and the roads leading to it in order to come upon him. There was, to be sure, the risk that he might meet the Hindoo face to face. That would spoil his plans altogether; but it could not be helped. The risk must be run.

At any rate, there seemed nothing more to be done that night. It was hardly to be expected that Kuttapani would return to the railway-station just after a long and fatiguing journey.

Geoffrey was pacing aimlessly back and forwards near the exit from the down platform, when a train arrived from the City; and the passengers who had alighted swarmed out of the narrow passage past the ticket-collector.

He stood back to let them pass him.

Suddenly he gave a start. *One of the passengers was the Hindoo who had tried to poison him in the refreshment room just twelve months before!*

The young Englishman knew him at once, and drew back further into the shadow—for by this time it was dusk—lest the Indian should catch sight of him. But it never occurred to the Hindoo barrister to look behind him. He gave up his ticket, declined a cab, and walked off in a north-westerly direction. Geoffrey Dundas followed on the other side of the street, not twenty yards behind.

CHAPTER XIII.

AT THE ENEMY'S HEADQUARTERS.

FOR more than half an hour Geoffrey followed the Hindoo barrister through the streets. The thoroughfares they passed through were so empty of traffic, that he had some difficulty in keeping the Indian in sight without awakening his suspicions.

At length a district was reached which had evidently been at one time a respectable, not to say fashionable, suburb. The houses were detached or semi-detached, often surrounded by gardens of considerable size. But they all had a forlorn, neglected appearance, looking as if they knew that the days of their prosperity were gone for ever. Some were let at low rents, others stood empty, their blank windows and grass-grown walks giving a melancholy aspect to the neighbourhood.

Down a street of such houses the Indian turned, Geoffrey still following a short distance behind. He entered a garden gate, and Geoffrey, stopping short suddenly as if he had lost his way, went back some yards. He wished above all things to hide from the Hindoo the fact that he had been "shadowed." For the greater part of an hour Geoffrey loitered about, keeping an eye all the time on the gate through which the Hindoo had passed. Then he ventured to approach the house itself.

By this time it was as dark as it could be at that season of the year. There was no moon. She had not yet risen.

The gate through which the Hindoo had disappeared led to a front garden, small, but planted thick with overgrown shrubs. The house itself was large and semi-detached. The nearer one of the pair seemed to be empty, but no notice board was visible. Geoffrey tried the gate. It was padlocked, so the young man placed his hand on the top of it and vaulted lightly over.

The house the Hindoo had entered was now on Geoffrey's right, almost hidden by the thick shrubs of both gardens. Each house had a large bow window on the first floor as well as on the ground floor. The street door of each was at the side farthest from the adjoining tenement; so that a casual observer might easily have supposed that the building formed but one residence.

Geoffrey walked across the grass-plot which lay between him and the house, and soon assured himself that no one was living in it, not even a caretaker. A large board, which bore an inscription to the effect that "This Desirable Family Residence" was to be let or sold, lay on its back inside the neglected laurel hedge. The wind had blown it down, and no one, apparently, had thought it worth while to stick it up again.

Geoffrey now passed through a screen of lattice-work to the back part of the house. Dark as it was, he could see that an out-building of some kind had been erected against the back wall. It was a large greenhouse. The builder had, from motives of economy, built one large square room, and then divided it in two by a partition, making one half the conservatory for one of the two houses, while the other half served the same purpose for the other dwelling.

Each house had a basement flood, so that in each the ground floor was raised some feet above the level of the soil. In the empty house—that is, the one Geoffrey was now exploring—a French window opened out of one of the ground floor rooms into

Vaulted lightly over.

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the conservatory, with a short flight of steps leading down from the floor of the house to the floor of the conservatory.

On the side of the greenhouse, next to the adjoining house—that is, the one the Hindoo had entered—the space was covered with shelves for flower pots, mostly empty. The roof and a great part of the partition-wall were covered with a creeping plant which had spread over half the wall-space the conservatory afforded.

All this Geoffrey saw at a glance as he stood outside the greenhouse, and looked through the lower part of the glass door which led from it to the garden.

It occurred to him that perhaps he might survey the premises more effectually if he could find his way into the empty house; and it struck him that he might gain an entrance by the French window leading from the conservatory. To enter the conservatory was easy, since a pane in the glass door was broken and nothing more had to be done than to put one's hand through the hole and turn the key.

Passing quietly through the conservatory to the end nearest the house, where a miniature fountain rusted in slimy neglect, Geoffrey mounted the steps which led to the French window and tried it. It was securely fastened.

A low cry all but burst from his lips.

He was in the act of turning to come away, when the sound of voices fell on his ear with startling distinctness. It was as if some one were talking at his elbow. He wheeled rapidly round, listening eagerly.

Soon he understood where the sound came from. The partition-wall between the two conservatories was merely of wood. A plank had fallen out; and the creeper which clothed the shabby wall covered the deficiency. There was, as it were, a natural communication between this deserted greenhouse and the conservatory belonging to the adjoining house.

With cautious steps Geoffrey moved nearer to the partition. The voices sounded loud and clear, but he could only understand a word here and there. He could make out that the language spoken was Hindustani; for at one time he had thought of going out to practise in Calcutta, and had mastered a little Hindustani as a preliminary step. But as for following the conversation, that was impossible.

Very gently—for he well knew that a creaking board might mean discovery, and that discovery might mean instant death—he mounted the shelves in front of him, till his head was on a level with the hole in the wall. Then, gently parting the foliage with his fingers, he looked through.

A low cry all but burst from his lips, so great was his astonishment.

A floor had been laid down in the greenhouse, on a level with that of the adjoining room in the house itself, so that the two together formed one large irregularly shaped apartment. The walls of this oddly formed room were hung with coloured silk draperies, which were gently stirred by the breeze admitted through the windows of the conservatory. The place was kept at a tropical temperature—Geoffrey could feel the stream of heated air on his face—and the air was not merely warm, but laden with the perfumes of some strange gum which was being burnt.

Plants, bearing large bright blossoms, and palm leaves lined the walls. The floor was covered with Indian mats and rugs. Part of it was raised, as if it were meant to serve for a couch. Silk cushions were strewn about on this dais; and on the lower floor were some bamboo tables. Such ornaments as could be seen were of brass, silver, or ivory. In a word the apartment looked as if it had been carried by some genie from an Indian palace, and transported to that grimy London suburb.

Geoffrey was more than surprised—he was astounded.

Though he heard voices plainly enough, he could see no one. The speakers (he judged from the sound of their voices) were seated close to the wall behind which he was standing, and therefore out of sight. But he could form a very good guess as to who they were. The hereditary priests of the Temple at Churruckpore—that undying body whose ancestors founded and consecrated the temple in far-off ages, and whose vengeance seemed insatiable—they alone could be the masters of this house. It was plain that they had made this house their headquarters, the centre from which they could carry out their schemes of revenge.

Nothing more was to be learned in the meantime. Geoffrey returned by the way he had come, and made his way to the street by vaulting a second time over the padlocked gate.

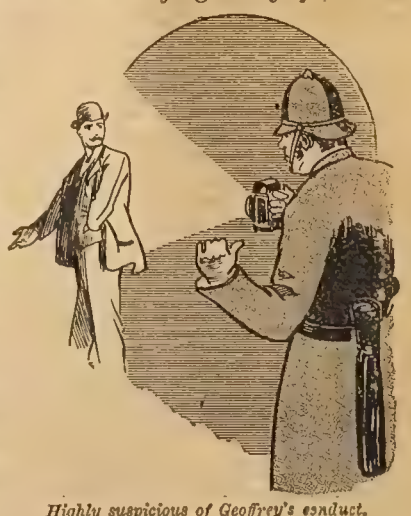
As he did so a burly policeman, passing along the opposite side of the road, called after him in pompous tones of authority, and wanted to know what he had been doing. The man was—or pretended to be—highly suspicious of Geoffrey's conduct; but a shilling judiciously introduced went a long way to quiet the good man's scruples, and he finally touched his helmet civilly, and walked away.

Geoffrey looked after him a moment or two as he marched solemnly, with rhythmic swing of his body and clank of boots, down the echoing street. The man seemed a perfect representative of British law and British justice—grave, honest, inflexible; but, oh, how slow, how stupid, when confronted with motives or methods foreign to the sphere of his experience!

What sort of reception, Geoffrey wondered, would he meet with if he went to any police-station in London, related his experience, and claimed the protection of the law? Why, they would laugh at him, and send him about his business—set him down as crazy. Unless a fact is patent to the meanest intelligence, proved up to the hilt, it does not exist for the police authorities any more than for a judge and jury.

What—Geoffrey asked himself—what complaint could he make? That an attempt had been made to poison him? The police would say it was pure imagination. That the Hindoos had visited the General with murderous intent? Mere unfounded suspicions! That Kuttapani had tried to kill him, and had all but succeeded?

Ah! That is another matter, the police inspector would say. Find Kuttapani, as you call him, and we will have something to say to him. Or, we will



Highly suspicious of Geoffrey's conduct.

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even try to find him for you. But as to these respectable householders, what is there to connect them with Kuttapani's attempt?

Indeed there was nothing. There was not a tittle of direct evidence against any one of the gang except Kuttapani. None. Absolutely none. And, even in his case, would not a jury ask what the motive for the alleged attempt at murder could be, and laugh at the idea of a long-standing vendetta actuating a few mild Hindoos?

Would they not say that it was very strange that Geoffrey had not made any complaint at a police-station in Wales? The chances were that they would finally remember that they "had only the prosecutor's word for it," and give the accused the benefit of the doubt.

No. Geoffrey was convinced that the law, and her ministers—the police, could do nothing to help him. And, in any case, he did not seek to revenge himself against Kuttapani. It would do him small good, and afford him no satisfaction, if that ignorant, tiger-like creature were to wear out his days in penal servitude.

No. He wanted to protect the General and Leila from Kuttapani's masters; and he was convinced that in order to do this he must adopt the methods of his enemies, and meet cunning with cunning. Merely to baffle one attempt after another would not do. Sooner or later an attempt would succeed, and another murder would be done.

But if the Hindoos were met and baffled on their own ground, if they found that their schemes were unravelled, and their most sudden attacks anticipated, they might be compelled to abandon their infernal schemes of vengeance.

Geoffrey still felt confident that when he allowed the Hindoos to suppose him dead, and began to play the spy upon them, he was pursuing the right path. But he felt utterly uncertain as to what his next step should be. To have found the right path was a great point. But, alas! the way was so dark that it was impossible to see a yard in advance. He felt like a blind man, groping his way through the streets of a strange city.

Passed from room to room.

Before leaving the street Geoffrey ascertained that the house the Hindoo barrister had entered was called Lancaster Villa, while the one he had tried to explore was named Chester Villa. Having fixed these names and the name of the street—Hartwell Road—in his memory, he went to an hotel, and after a hearty supper in place of dinner he went to bed.

Next morning Geoffrey's first care was to find lodgings in a quiet street not far from the road in which the Hindoos had fixed their abode. He then telegraphed to his friend Linton, asking him to call upon him at his new quarters that evening.

In the afternoon, after making necessary purchases, he called at the local house-agents and ascertained that the house next to the one occupied by the Hindoos was to let. Geoffrey explained that he did not wish to become a tenant, but that he was willing to pay a small sum for the use of the empty greenhouse.

This was arranged, and Geoffrey thus acquired the right of entering the greenhouse attached to Chester Villa at any time he pleased. The agent's clerk also promised, for a small consideration, to give him timely notice of any one proposing to take the house—an event which was far from likely—so that he might secure it if need be.

Linton turned up at the appointed hour, and listened with the keenest interest, while his friend told what had happened during the last few days. But when Geoffrey told him of his determination to conceal his existence from every one for the next twelve months, Linton felt inclined to smile.

"Seems an absurd sort of thing to do, doesn't it?" said Geoffrey quietly, answering his friend's look.

"Well, yes. I confess it seems so to me."

"Linton, it is the only thing to do. Next year, as sure as you live, these human bloodhounds will attack the General. I believe they would have done it last week if he had not got out of their way. But now that they suppose me to be dead I shall be free from their observation. I will keep a watch on them, and I hope not only to save the General, but to catch them in the act, and choke out this accursed conspiracy."

Linton shook his head.

"I hardly think you were cut out for an amateur detective, my dear fellow," he said. "And at any rate, I see nothing to prevent your living in the Temple as usual."

"No, Linton. You forget that the first attempt on my life was made in the restaurant belonging to the Law Courts, and I more than suspect that it was made by a Hindoo who has got called to the bar. If I went to the Temple my enemies would hear of it next day. But I don't mind shamming dead for a time. My practice won't suffer, seeing that I have none to speak of. My friends may suppose that I have gone on a yachting expedition, or anything they choose.

"What I want you to do is to go to my chambers now and then, and bring me my letters, making the best excuse you can to my clerk. He can tell any one who asks for me that I am out of town. Very likely I shall take a run on the Continent, for I am convinced that those queer murderers will lie by for another twelvemonth. I hardly expect to find them taking any active steps till next spring."

"And Sir Arthur?"

"I will write to him and say that I shall be invisible for the next twelve months. Of course, he can write to me if he likes. And that reminds me—would you mind addressing a few envelopes to the General? You know the address—Seacombe Towers, near Torwyn, South Devon."

"With pleasure. But why all this precaution?"

"Suppose that next year one of Sir Arthur's servants were to mention in Kuttapani's hearing that I had been writing to his master during the year?"

"Well you can't be too careful," returned Linton; and after smoking several pipes, and promising once more to carry out all the instructions given to him to the letter, the young barrister took his leave.

Geoffrey was now fully prepared to begin his watching campaign. But it is not given to man to foresee the future, even for a day. No sooner had he resigned himself to the distasteful life of seclusion and espionage, than an event happened which upset all his calculations.

After dark on the following evening he went to make a reconnaissance at Lancaster Villa. From the street no light was visible. He went into the conservatory of the adjoining house as he had done before, but could hear no sound.

Unwilling to run the risk of being seen by the Hindoos, as he probably would be if he were to come in the morning, yet resolved to examine the house by daylight, Geoffrey spent the short summer night in the conservatory.

As soon as it was light he climbed up to the place where the board was missing from the partition-wall, and looked through the aperture.

The flowers and creepers were there; for the rest—bare boards! Silken hangings, rugs, furniture, luxurious appointments, had vanished like a dream! It almost seemed as if the Hindoos had been made aware by some enchantment that their lurking-place had been discovered, and had stolen silently away in the night.

Geoffrey went into the garden, made his way without much difficulty into the garden of Lancaster Villa, and finally succeeded in entering the house itself.

There was something eerie in the very echo of the young man's footsteps as he passed with stealthy step from room to room in the dim, ghostly morning light, thinking that behind every door there might be an enemy waiting him, with murder in his heart. But he found no one. From cellar to garret the house was empty and bare.

(To be continued.)

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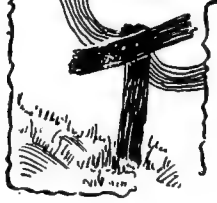
CARMELITA'S SPRINGTIME



HE rain came down so suddenly that Lackland had to jump to it to reach the porch of the nearest house. When he got there, he took his position near the wall, that the big drops falling so heavily on the dusty street might not reach his immaculate flannel trousers as mud.

Not that Lackland was strongly averse to a wetting. He had often been drenched to the skin when sailing his boat, and always took it with the most matter-of-fact composure. But he did object to a draggled look or to getting just enough moistened to make the necessity of a change doubtful, despite a certain unpleasant feeling from clinging raiment. That was discomfort bought by no pleasure void of all compensation.

Showers in Nice are often of this unheralded kind. But violent effusions, whether of the heart or sky, spend themselves quickly. The rain subsided after some moments. Lackland came forward, and, leaning against the slender column bereft of paint, but brown with years, he put his head out to reconnoitre, raising it slightly to see if he might venture forth with the rest of himself.

Something that was not a raindrop fell upon his straw hat. He saw a snowy gardenia tumble into the mud; and, alas! lose its virginal whiteness. Evidently it had come from the top of the porch, for not even in Flora's capital does a spring sky rain flowers.

He twisted his head round and looked up. As he did so, a second blossom smote him softly on the cheek. He caught it as it fell, and also caught a glimpse of a hand quickly drawn back—not so quickly but that he got an impression of its brown, tapering slimness.

He picked his way out into the street a few paces, holding the gardenia in his hand, and then turned, with equal deliberation, to scan the top of the portico. It was overrun with flowers, which tumbled in a wave of bloom over the worm-eaten ledge. Seen through this glowing mass was a young girl, not more than sixteen. Her small, white teeth showed through lips faintly smiling, while her long eyes, narrowed with twinkling merriment, looked indolently down upon him. Lackland smiled in frank good-fellowship, and held up the gardenia.

"Did you drop this?" he asked gaily.

The girl, leaning her vivid face on her crossed hands, said not a word, but continued to regard him with easy amusement. He was there, and it was mildly entertaining to see what he would do.

"Well, I shall keep it," he said, tucking it into the lapel of his coat.

"I threw it away," said the girl, with mild disdain.

"You threw it at me! I captured it, and so I have a right to it," he retorted.

He raised the lapel of his coat, and kissed the flower. After this extravagance he raised his eyes again to the girl.

"The rain has stopped," she said mockingly.

"Yes, I believe it has. I wish it would begin again. Then I would have to wait for it to blow over once more," he returned coolly.

"But it has stopped," she repeated insistently.

"And I am going, if that is what you mean. You are not very hospitable to a poor, wet stranger. Good-bye!"

He did not look such a distressful object as he gracefully raised his hat and bowed, a good-natured look in his dark-blue eyes and a smile on his full lips. Her eyes followed the well-built figure of the young fellow as he retreated, her lips still parted in a half smile. As Lackland turned down a side street he looked back. She did not change her position, nor move when he again raised his hat.

The next morning, after his late breakfast, Lackland lit a cigar and strolled through the public gardens. As he neared the sea he saw a graceful figure in front of him; *petite*, but with a light elastic carriage, and a manner of holding the head which recalled the maiden of the gardenia. He quickened his steps till he overtook her. It was she.

"Good morning," he said blithely. "You see I have your flower still." He indicated a slightly drooping gardenia which adorned his button-hole.

"Your flower," she said at once, without any sign of surprise. "I threw it away."

"So you did," he replied. "But it is withered. I should like a fresh one. Throw one of those away. Won't you?"

She glanced down, with great demureness, at a bunch of them tucked in the bosom of her gown. Her small daintiness was well set off by the simple white muslin dress. Lackland thought she looked as fragrant and as cool as one of her gardenias. She raised her head and, with her narrowed eyes, glanced at him nonchalantly.

"I want them all. You can get plenty of them. I threw that one at your hat. I didn't know what was under it," she explained with great dignity.

"Well, my hat is just the same target with me under it that it would be with anything else. And I should like one of those you have got. Throw one away," he pleaded.

"Oh, no! I want them all." The smile of quiet mischievousness played on her lips again.

He could not induce her to give the flower to him. But with some tact he managed to prolong the conversation, and discovered in the course of their talk that she sometimes walked on the sea-front after tea.

That evening was a warm one, and Lackland met the little muslin-gowned damsel serenely taking the soft air on the parade as if in pursuance of this occasional habit. After this they chanced to meet frequently, and it got to be a very natural thing for them to walk together. The dainty prettiness of the girl, her demure piquancy, the perfect confidence in herself, joined to a child-like *naïveté*, aroused his easy-going interest. He loved to cross swords with Carmelita.

They got to be quite good friends in those soft spring days beneath the pure azure of the sky. There was never any boldness in her assurance, and a touch of subtle dignity which often flavoured her sprightliness was never without its charm to Lackland.

It chanced that one evening, full of the chastened tenderness of a spring day waning into dusk, they had paused near the cathedral steps on their return from a stroll through the market-place. He took her hand on some playful pretext, and held it in his own bronzed palm. Carmelita allowed it to rest there for a moment, gently, and then withdrew it. But not before a very stiff old lady, who was bowled swiftly by in an open carriage, had taken in the picture.

Two days later Mrs. Lackland declared that if she stayed any longer in Nice she could only hope to have her ashes reach England; and that as she did not certainly incline to an ante-mortem cremation, they would go to Paris, and sail a little earlier than they had planned for America. The old lady watched her son sharply over her fan as he assented, non-committally, to the proposition.

This was a month since the day when he had fled to sanctuary in a certain portico, and had been pelted with the gardenia.

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That evening he again walked with Carmelita by the sea. He proposed after a time that they should sit down. The dusk was stealing over the water and down upon the trees along the roads. The waves broke on the beach below them, with an indolent splash.

"Carmelita," he said, slowly, and placing his hand upon her waist, "I am glad you threw that gardenia at me."

She made some faint movement of protest as his fingers clasped her waist, but suffered it. At his remark she retorted, with a contented smile: "I threw it at your hat. I didn't know who was there." There was a world of girlish coquetry in her bright eyes as they rested on him.

"We have had such pleasant times that we might not have had but for that flower. I shall remember them when I go away. Shall you think of me when I am gone, Carmelita?"

The girl raised herself and slowly pushed away his arm.

"Are you going away?" she asked, with a subtle change in her manner.

"Why, of course. It is not everyone who can live in this delighful country always, as you do," he replied in his comfortable tones.

"When are you going?"

"Saturday."

"How long have you known this?"

"Since this morning," There was a slight pause. He met the look from beneath her arched eyebrows negatively.

"Do you want to go?" The question was almost imperious, and the girl covered him with her bright eyes, round enough now.

"Well, I don't know that I want to, but I don't object. I knew it would have to be pretty soon. It is my mother's move. She says it is so hot here."

The girl turned her face sharply away and fixed her gaze on the sea. The soft wind blew the hair about her smooth forehead and stirred it gently on her slender neck.

"Aren't you sorry I am going away, Carmelita?" he said cajolingly, as he would to a child.

"Are you sorry to go?" She turned her head and arched her eyebrows as she looked at him.

"Why, yes," he replied slowly. "I like being here well enough; I like any place where I can sun myself."

She turned towards the sea again for a moment, as if measuring the force of a rival. For a few moments she seemed lost in deep reverie. Then she got to her feet. "I want to go home," she said. "I would rather go alone. Good-bye."

"It isn't a real good-bye, you know," said Lackland, more briskly. "I am going to Monte Carlo to-morrow, but shall come back on Friday. I shall see you again then, Carmelita. Won't I?"

"Good-bye," she repeated, and left him standing, with a touch of melancholy on him that he had not bargained for. She had looked so slight, so childlike, sitting there, with the sea air lightly moving her hair. He watched the little white figure disappear in the shadows. He pulled himself together and walked off musingly. She was such a child. Half his amusement in her was seeing her grow.

When he came back on Friday, Mrs. Lackland had more than he expected for him to do, and was fretful with her health and touchily exacting in her demands. The time came to go, and he had not been able to see Carmelita as he had promised.

"I can write to her and tell her," he thought, and shrugged his shoulders.

It was eight years before Lackland was in Nice again. He had passed two years in England with his mother and he did not write to Carmelita all that time. He did not know what to say, and he hated writing letters. It had been diverting to have the little girl to talk with and to study the light emotions and thoughts that swayed her. The dark eyes, the small white teeth and play of the lips had coloured her conversation. But he couldn't imagine how or what she would write. Probably her letters would be childlike; possibly, dull.

Sometimes when he recalled the firm little figure sitting by the sea, and the wind so lightly stirring the dark hair, in what had really been their parting interview, he wondered what impression that month of spring had made upon Carmelita. He had never known quite how she took things, and the unexpected sentiments she sometimes expressed had been part of her charm for him. He had always thought that it was a very pleasant springtime. He had thought of it several times, generally with a half-smile on his lips.

Nice was unchanged in all that time, and one day as he was passing through St. George Street, he stopped and looked up at the flowers, which still fell rankly over the ledge of the portico.

"Eight years ago," he mused as he leaned for a moment against the slender pillar, as if he could conjure back the rest of the scene, and a slender hand would throw a gardenia at him again. But, no! the house seemed very quiet, and he saw no young slim figure looking down.

He sighed impatiently. He must ask someone about Carmelita Godardo. She must have grown out of her slim girlishness. Perhaps she was living in one of these little houses, a demure young matron, with a young Carmelita who called her "mother." Yes, he must inquire about her.

He turned on his heel, with another sigh, half-weary, and strolled listlessly up the street. As he walked on he saw a line of children trooping along towards him, in pairs. He drew to the side to let them pass. Then he saw a slender figure in black, with linen bands about her face, at the end of the procession, shepherding it. As the nun passed, with downcast eyes, he saw the clear, olive tint, and the quiet, sweet expression of her face.

How little she was changed, and yet, how much! This was a woman with a soul, and Carmelita was a child, an artless girl, and he had not thought of her soul. He gave another quick sigh as he reflected on how he had lived those eight years. How swiftly he had ruled them off, and what had he achieved!

The next day he called at the convent. He would like to see her, to hear her voice again, with the soft sweet accent. The sister-porter took his message and name. After some moment's withdrawal she returned, and said that Sister Philomena would rather he would see the Superior, as her duties kept her engaged.

When Lackland turned to go out of the hard, oppressive bareness of the convent parlour he felt older than he was. There was a touch of loneliness on him, as if he had parted with some portion of his being to which he had not before adverted. He lounged down to the promenade, his hands in his pockets, straining his coat tightly about him. A small yacht lay a few hundred yards out in the motionless sea. At a sign of his hand a small boat put off with a thin weather-beaten man in the stern. He looked up at Lackland as he got in, who nodded without speaking.

"Well, she's ready," said the man, "and I think you'll find her a handy little craft. Only she ain't got no name. What do you intend to call her? I'll paint that on her and she's done, and you can take her out whenever you like."

Lackland raised his head and looked out at sea a moment. Then he said slowly: "*Sister Philomena.*" That night the name in slim black letters was drying on the stern of the little yacht as she tossed lightly on the water, as pure and white as a gardenia.

For a week Lackland almost lived upon the sea. He would take the *Sister Philomena* out beyond all sight of land, and then cruise about according to the wind. This tired young man loved the sea with an endurance of affection greater than aught else could command him.

Then he received a note from the Bishop on the subject of his boat's name: "I am sure that when I tell you that giving the name of one of the good nuns at the Convent to your pleasure-boat is creating talk among people, and that Catholics feel somewhat indignant at it as a sort of scandal; while the Sister Philomena herself would deprecate such a use of the name by which she has consecrated herself to God, you will feel it right to find some other name that will not be open to such objections."

A day or two after this the *Sister Philomena* disappeared on the horizon and never touched shore again.

What that month had been to Carmelita Godardo neither he nor others ever knew.

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WE landed at a picturesque little spot up the Thames well above Windsor, just as the sun went down, and rigged up our tent for the night. After supper we lay on our backs round the fire, for the nights were chilly, and smoked. Neither Fred Palmer nor I did much anecdoting, but we made an excellent audience to Arnold Vokes, and he, much travelled man that he was, had a fresh yarn ready whenever we were in a mood for listening. This night he was in particularly good form, and crossing his legs, with his head propped up on the cushioned stern seat of the *Water-Witch* which we had brought ashore, he began, just as if he were reading the words on the star-studded heavens :—

"The eight o'clock train on the Duluth, South Shore, and Atlantic Railway takes you away from the beautiful town of Marquette on Lake Superior, climbs slowly up to the iron hills, passes through Negaunee, Ishpeming, Michigamme, rival cities of the 'Northern Peninsular,' and, bowling along at twenty miles an hour, brings you at noon to Sidnaw, whence a short branch line extends to Ontonagon; and if you have to change carriages, may Providence help you in your sorry plight, for you must wait four hours in a dreary place.

"The main feature of Sidnaw is silence—the awful silence of the great surrounding forest; but it is broken at intervals by a dog fight or an explosion of invectives from the saloon district, where red-shirted, slouch-hatted woodsmen from the lumber camps play cards, just visible within the darkened doorways.

"I had changed carriages at Sidnaw once, and I was on my way thither again, depressed and low-spirited at the prospect before me, when, all suddenly, I was invited to attend a wedding while I waited, and once more the world looked rosy. The bride-elect occupied the seat behind me in the car. I had not noticed her particularly until she bent forward, and, touching me on the arm, asked if I could inform her at what time our train was due in Sidnaw.

"Then I turned, and beheld a lady of some forty summers, wearing a flowery gown of white and green, with black gloves, and having beside her one of those big black travelling bags that circulate so freely in the West.

"The ready politeness with which I answered her question encouraged her to ask more, and eventually I found it necessary to sit sideways that I might more conveniently keep up my end of the conversation, which shifted from one topic to another with wonderful rapidity, and finally merged into a romance of which she was the heroine, and to the completion of which I was cordially asked to lend my presence.

"'It's eighteen years,' she said, 'since this Mr. Prince left Kaukauny and came up here into the lumber camps. Him and me was young folks then, and kep' company together a spell; but when he asked me to marry him, I said "No; I wouldn't marry nobody." Then he went away, and I never heard of him till three years ago he wrote, and said somebody'd told him I was single, and he was waitin' for me. Wouldn't never marry any other woman, he said, nohow, and he hoped I'd take him into consideration again.

"'That letter made me feel kind o' queer—to think he'd been so faithful all these years. I never believed he set so much store by me as all that. I had a good mind to write him a favourable letter right then and there; but when it came to the point, I couldn't make up my mind to do it, so I just wrote him I wanted a year more to think about it.

"'Well, I never heard a word from him no more than if he was dead till the year was up; and then he wrote again, and said he was still waitin'.

"'I put him off till Christmas, then till spring—and so it's been a-goin' up to two weeks ago, when it come over me all at once that I wasn't treatin' the man right. He'd been dreadful long-sufferin' and patient, and deserved his reward, and I set down and wrote him I'd have him.

"'He wanted to come down to Kaukauny after me, but I wouldn't have it. I told him to save his money, and I'd come up. So we fixed it that way, and to-day the weddin' comes off, and I want you to be there. Mr. Prince's got a minister from Ontonagon, and he's invited a few of his friends to witness the ceremony, and I guess it'll be a pleasant, sociable little gatherin'. Anyhow, it'll be better than waitin' for the train with nothing to do.'

"I agreed with the lady, and eagerly accepted her invitation. I had a curiosity to behold this faithful old lover who had waited eighteen years—waited with infinite patience until the girl he loved had lost all of the attractions of youth.

"Of the half-dozen passengers in the carriage we were the only persons to alight when the train reached Sidnaw. I helped my companion with her big valise, and she, carrying a large strawboard box and a parcel tied in a newspaper, followed me.

"Two or three woodsmen, standing about the station, gazed idly at us as we stood, undetermined which way to go. And one lean, sandy-whiskered man, who had been sitting on the platform at the further end, jabbing his knife into the boards, slowly rose and advanced. She was eyeing him.

"'Is this Miss Birtchet?' he asked, with a sheepish smile.

"'That's my name,' she answered—'Artemisia Birtchet; and I must say, Abe Prince, that you seem dreadful glad to see me.'

"He held out his hand; but she couldn't take it on account of the parcels, and he scratched his head with it.

"'This ain't Wednesday,' he suggested, after an interval of thought.

"'I know it ain't,' she answered; 'and it ain't Tuesday or Monday; but it's Thursday, August 13th, and I was to come on the 13th, if I remember rightly, and I think I do.'

"He shifted his gaze to me, and he looked at her again.

"'By gosh!' he said, in a hollow voice, 'I've lost my reckonin', somehow; I thought the 13th was a Wednesday, and I had that minister here yesterday.'

"'Well, where is he now?' asked Miss Birtchet quickly.

"'He went back. I kinder thought you might have changed your mind again, and——' he struck himself on the leg. 'I don't see how in thunder I got off on that date. Are you sure *you* ain't made no mistake, Artemisia?'

"'I'm sure I *have* made a mistake,' answered Miss Birtchet, with withering sarcasm. 'I've made the mistake of comin' 'way up here in the woods to marry a pesky fool; but, thank my stars, I ain't done it. If you'll be so kind and obligin' as to hold that bag a minit longer,' she continued, turning to me, 'I'll just step in here and buy a ticket for Kaukauny.'

The down train was approaching, and when Miss Birtchet appeared with her ticket I followed her into the carriage.

"'Aren't you a little hasty?' I asked.

"'Little nothin'!' she snapped; and I saw that it would be of no use to argue with her. I left the valise and bade her good-bye.

"When the train was gone I went over to the hotel to get my dinner. Mr. Prince was sitting on the verandah, with his legs crossed. His aspect was grave.

"'That was rather a bad mistake of yours,' I ventured to remark.

"'It's just as well,' he answered. 'I knew 'twas just as well the minit I set eyes on her.'"

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ON BOARD THE BIG SHIP.

NOT long ago I was a passenger on the fastest steamship in the world. I wanted to see the engines while in motion. The matter was easily arranged. There they were, two great and splendid pieces of machinery of 15,000 horse power each, working away as smoothly as patent lever watches, and shoving the great ship through heavy seas at twenty-two miles an hour.

Well now, all the organs in your body are parts of an engine—the stomach, the liver, the heart, the lungs, and so forth. When they are in perfect order you hardly know they are there. Yet the work they do is something prodigious. And from the minute you are born to the minute you die they never wholly stop. When any one of them gets out of order it must be repaired as it runs, or not at all. And it is at such times that you realise their presence.

For example, why should Mrs. Annie Elliott say, "*My food turned heavy as lead*"? Nature doesn't intend that one's victuals should ever feel like that after he has swallowed them. Yet they often do, and everybody knows more or less about it from personal experience. Once I saw in a grist mill a hopper half full of wheat that was decaying and sprouting. The matter? Why the mill was in a law suit, or the owner was, anyway, and the stones hadn't turned for months.

Now the human stomach—but hold on. Let's have our story rightly put together; the facts first, the comment afterwards.

"Up to two years ago," says Mrs. Elliott, "I was always strong and healthy. In the autumn of 1892, however, I began to feel heavy, tired, and weakly. I had somehow lost my natural ambition and energy. My appetite fell away; I had no desire or relish for my meals, and there was a sour, disagreeable taste in my mouth.

"After eating I had great weight, and a sense of fulness at the chest and around the waist; and, however light the meal, all my food turned heavy as lead. In spite of the most scrupulous care as to diet I continued to suffer in this manner; and as time passed I became very weak and nervous. I consulted doctors from time to time, who gave me medicines, but I obtained no real benefit from anything I took.

"Now better and again worse, yet never well, I continued until January of this year (1894), when I was persuaded by my brother to try a medicine which he said had done so much for him. I allude to Mother Seigel's Syrup. I had, before this, been advised by many friends to try this famous preparation, but declined because I had no faith in advertised medicines.

"Nevertheless, I procured a bottle at Mr. Sloan's, the chemist, Bentinck Crescent, Elswick Road, and when I had taken it for ten days I felt much relieved. My appetite improved, and food no longer distressed me. By further use of the Syrup I soon regained my original health. Whenever I feel any symptoms of my old ailment *I fly to Mother Seigel's Syrup*, and it never fails to relieve me at once. You have my permission to make any use you wish of this statement. (Signed) Annie Elliott, 125, Hartington Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne, October 17th, 1894."

Now, take notice. The human body is a complicated machine for the digestion of food; that is all it does. At the head of the process is the stomach, the living bag into which your food drops as you swallow it. Its difficult work makes it liable to disease—indigestion and dyspepsia; and from this disease arise a whole catalogue of minor disorders, with grim death showing his face at the end of the list. Whatsoever cures indigestion and dyspepsia cures its consequences; and there are thousands of good people in England who affirm that Mother Seigel's Syrup does it.

What is the value of a medicine like that? Why it is worth exactly what life and health are worth.

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